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TEACHER TURNOVER AND TEACHER LOSS

IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(TITLE)

BY

C. ROBERT ELLIS

PLAN B PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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AND PREPARED IN COURSE

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1966

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS
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PREFACE

Recently, a considerable amount of research has been done on the subject of teacher turnover and teacher loss in the public schools. Many people connected directly with public school teaching have concerned themselves with what is wrong with teaching and how they could recruit and retain good qualified classroom teachers.

This paper is intended to explore causes and effects of teacher turnover and teacher loss in the public schools. It is hoped that, as a potential administrator, the writer may become aware of the problems which produce teacher turnover and teacher loss and that, if need be, he may be able to present some methods of procedure in an attempt to solve this dilemma.

This paper relies heavily on surveys conducted by the U. S. Office of Education and by the research divisions of several state education associations. The writer derived some further evidence that these surveys were correct by conducting a questionnaire survey of Evansville College graduates from the class of 1960.

The writer wishes to thank Mr. Donald Widick, director of alumni affairs at Evansville College, and his staff for their valuable assistance; and to thank the Evansville College graduates of 1960 who assisted in the survey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thousands of individuals in the United States qualified for teaching or actually possessing teaching certificates are not teaching. Each year 8-10% of those employed as classroom teachers quit teaching altogether. At the end of the present school year, another 8-10% of those now employed as public school classroom teachers will quit teaching, and approximately another 8% will transfer to other public school systems.¹ These individuals represent a poor investment of tax dollars and an inefficient utilization of training facilities. This type of extravagance cannot be condoned by today's society.

The problem of teacher loss and teacher turnover needs to be given high priority among educators. Teacher turnover and teacher loss have reached such large proportions in the United States that educators have, in recent years, shown an interest in making classroom teaching more lucrative and fulfilling. However, most of the interest and enthusiasm has come from state and

¹Robert H. Gourley and Leonard Pourchot, "Teacher Dropouts," Illinois Education, LIII, No. 6 (February, 1965), p. 259.

for some other reason. In this paper, both terms are used to mean the separation of teachers from classroom teaching positions in public schools and does not include teachers' taking other educational positions. Therefore, those teachers who have continued in education in capacities other than classroom teaching will still be counted as a loss to the teaching profession. These persons do constitute a part of the field of education and include those who become principals, those who move into college teaching positions, those who become foreign exchange teachers, those who go on leave of absence, and those who change to private school teaching. They have, however, been excluded from this study.

BEGINNING TEACHERS CONSTITUTE GREATEST TURNOVER AND LOSS. "Every other person who began teaching last year plans to quit teaching in five years."² This statement, made in 1957, is still considered to be a good yardstick as verified by later studies because teacher turnover and teacher loss is greatest among beginning teachers. "Two out of every ten new teachers last year did not even plan to return to teaching this year."³

²"New Teachers Quit Soon," Science News Letter, LXXII, No. 25 (December 21, 1957), p. 388.

³Ibid.

This high rate of turnover and loss in beginning teachers was disclosed in a questionnaire survey made by Dr. Ward S. Mason, a specialist in teacher personnel statistics at the U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

The expected turnover for beginning teachers is nearly 20% after the first year and 50% by the end of five years. This is in comparison to the seven and one-half percent normally chalked up as annual losses to the entire teaching profession through death, retirement and other factors.⁴

Willavene Wolf and William C. Wolf, Jr. found that for every 100 students who satisfy state certification requirements, about 60 can be expected to enter the classroom. Of these 60 about 10-15% will not return to teaching the following year. Two years after the original 100 students graduated, fewer than half are engaged in teaching, and, after 10 years, only 12-15 of the initial 100 prospective teachers may be teaching in classrooms.⁵

J. Scott Hunter found that the percentage of teachers planning to leave classroom teaching within five years was not substantially reduced in the second year, even after the 14 percent who taught only one year had departed.⁶ Although many of those planning to

⁴Ibid.

⁵Willavene Wolf and William C. Wolf, Jr., "Teacher Dropouts: Still A Dilemma," School and Society, XCII (April 18, 1964), pp. 193-94.

⁶J. Scott Hunter, "Turnover Among Beginning Teachers -- A Followup," School Life, XLIV (April, 1962), pp. 22-24.

leave are women who anticipate family responsibilities, at least for a few years, there is some evidence that many beginning teachers look upon teaching not as a career but as a stepping stone to some other field. Perhaps this is the problem that deserves most of the attention in the effort to conserve teachers in education.

CHAPTER II

REASONS FOR TEACHER TURNOVER AND TEACHER LOSS AS DEFINED IN SURVEYS

The latest studies on teacher turnover and teacher loss that the writer found available were conducted within the last ten years. These included the studies by the U. S. Office of Education; Montgomery County, Maryland Schools; Minnesota Education Association, Research Division; Western New York School Study Council; Oregon Education Association, Research Division; and Tennessee Education Association, Research Division. The surveys by the different research divisions and study councils show varying reasons for teacher turnover and teacher loss. However, many of the reasons are the same in the different surveys.

NATIONWIDE STUDIES. The latest figures of the U. S. Office of Education were reported by Lindenfeld.⁷ Between fall 1959 and fall 1960, 16.8 percent of the public-school teachers left their jobs: 3,100 had died, 16,300 had retired, 6,000 had changed to non-teaching jobs in their own districts, an undetermined number had changed to non-teaching jobs in other districts, and 77,000 had transferred to other public school districts. When the above factors

⁷Frank Lindenfeld, "Teacher Turnover in the Public Schools, 1959-60," School Life, XLIV (January-February, 1962), p. 12.

are taken into account, the overall rate of turnover is calculated at 8.1%. On the other hand, it should be noted that 165,300 teachers enter service and 116,000 leave the profession each year. Lindenfeld reported the estimated numbers of teachers as follows in Table 1.

TABLE 1⁸

ESTIMATED NUMBER, AND STANDARD ERROR OF ESTIMATE,
OF THE TEACHING STAFF AND TEACHING STAFF
CHANGES IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 50
STATES AND D.C., FALL
1959 TO FALL 1960

Teaching staff category	Number of teachers	Standard error
1	2 ^a	3 ^b
	(thousands)	(thousands)
Staff, opening of classes		
Fall 1959.....	1,439.5	11.9
Fall 1960.....	1,488.6	12.5
Staff changes, fall 1959 to fall 1960		
Total hired.....	242.3	4.0
Entering.....	109.3	2.2
Re-entering.....	55.8	1.8
Returning from leave of absence..	12.4	.5
Other.....	43.4	1.7
Transferring.....	77.0	2.1
Total Separated.....	193.2	3.3
On leave of absence..	16.6	.5
Retired.....	16.3	.5
Deceased.....	3.1	.2
Dismissed.....	24.4	1.6
Changed to non-teach- ing job same district	6.0	.4
Other, n.e.c.....	126.6	2.5

^aDue to rounding, detail does not always add to total.

^bThe standard error figures reported above should be interpreted as follows. They are a measure of the extent to which the estimate derived from the sample differs from the actual value.

⁸Ibid.

Believing that turnover occurs most often among teachers in their first five years of teaching, the U. S. Office of Education asked a 10 percent sample of first-year teachers what they intended doing the following year and found that the teachers' statements were a fairly accurate prediction of rate. Table 2 presents the findings of this survey.

TABLE 2⁹

SURVEY OF A 10 PERCENT SAMPLING OF
FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS OF THEIR INTENT
TOWARD EDUCATION THE FOLLOWING YEAR

Course of action	Percent planning course of action	Percent of subsample following the course
1	2	3
Continue in education.....	87%	86%
Teach in same district....	68	68
Teach in another district.	17	15
Accept other educational responsibilities.....	2	3
Leave education.....	12	14
For homemaking.....	5	7
For military service.....	3	2
For another occupation....	3	3
For other reasons.....	1	2

Hunter emphasized, however, that prediction of individual action is less accurate. The follow-up survey of the individual replies as reported by Hunter appears in Table 3.

⁹J. Scott Hunter, "Turnover Among Beginning Teachers -- A Followup," School Life, XLIV (April, 1962), pp. 22-24.

TABLE 3¹⁰

FOLLOWUP SURVEY OF THE INDIVIDUAL REPLIES

Course of action	Number following the course	Percent correctly predicted
1	2	3
Continue in education	1,127	84%
Teach in same district	461	91
Teach in another district	498	61
Leave education	751	62
For homemaking	314	82
For military service	188	58
For another occupation	177	43

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND. Rufus C. Browning reported two studies made to find out why teachers leave the Montgomery County schools and why they stay. Of 241 former teachers, 95 gave marriage, pregnancy, and family as the chief reason for leaving; 58, that the husband, wife, or family was leaving the area; only one mentioned inadequate salary as the chief reason. Retirement, leave of absence, death, and promotion were given by the remaining 87 teachers. For women, and 87 percent of the respondents were women, the chief reasons were marriage and home duties and moving from the area. For men, the chief reasons were acceptance of a more desirable position, travel, return to school, and

¹⁰Ibid.

moving from the area. A majority of the former teachers said they would like to return if given the opportunity.

Browning's second survey sought to find out the most attractive and the least attractive features of the school system. The most attractive features mentioned most often by former teachers and by the present teachers were the financial rewards and the teaching atmosphere. The least attractive features mentioned most frequently by both groups were excessive organization and work load, educational philosophy, and non-teaching duties.¹¹

OREGON STUDY. The Oregon Education Association found that 17.0 percent of the state's 18,960 teachers left their 1961-62 positions. The trends reported indicated that higher losses were sustained by second and third-class districts and by first-class union high school districts than by first-class elementary districts. Districts over 1,000 children of school age (4 to 20 in age) are known as districts of the first class, and as such are given some important additional privileges; districts having from 200 to 1,000 school census children are known as districts of the second class; and districts having less than 200 census children are known as districts of the third class. No attempt was made to find out why the teachers left and where they went.¹²

¹¹ Rufus C. Browning, "How to Tackle the Problem of Teacher Turnover," School Management, VII (June, 1963), pp. 80-82.

¹² Oregon Education Association, "School Personnel Turnover in Oregon, 1961-62 to 1962-63," O.E.A. Research Bulletin, XXII, No. 4 (March, 1963), pp. 1-9.

MINNESOTA SURVEYS. The Minnesota Education Association for seven consecutive years compiled data on teacher turnover. The 1960-61 and 1961-62 surveys are reported here. The 1960-61 survey considered four factors: size of school, existence of a salary schedule, existence of adequate housing, and average salary. The 1961-62 survey added two more factors: existence of satisfactory eating facilities and existence of a theatre. The principal findings of these studies were:

1. Large schools hold teachers longer than small schools.
2. The estimated state median turnover in 1960-61 was 13.1 percent; in 1961-62, 13.3 percent.
3. Schools with high median salaries tend to hold teachers best.
4. Schools with salary schedules hold teachers better than schools without schedules.
5. Schools in communities having satisfactory eating facilities and adequate housing hold teachers better than schools in communities without them.

The 1960-61 and 1961-62 turnover rates compared with the median salaries of the school districts are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4

TEACHER TURNOVER COMPARED WITH SALARIES IN
MINNESOTA SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 1960-61 AND 1961-62

Median salary of school district	Median percent ¹³ of turnover, 1960-61	Median percent ¹⁴ of turnover, 1961-62
1	2	3
Below \$4,000.....	10.0%	
\$4,000 - 4,099.....	22.5	} 16.7%
4,100 - 4,199.....	30.6	
4,200 - 4,299.....	18.1	22.5
4,300 - 4,399.....	15.0	15.5
4,400 - 4,499.....	18.2	13.8
4,500 - 4,599.....	13.3	20.0
4,600 - 4,699.....	17.3	18.4
4,700 - 4,799.....	17.0	16.6
4,800 - 4,899.....	13.6	14.1
4,900 - 4,999.....	11.5	15.6
5,000 - 5,099.....	9.1	14.3
5,100 - 5,199.....	8.5	12.5
5,200 - 5,299.....	13.3	11.8
5,300 - 5,399.....	8.9	9.2
5,400 - 5,499.....	12.5	10.5
5,500 and over.....	8.8	9.6
Median percent of total turnover	13.3%	13.1%

NEW YORK SURVEY. The Western New York Study Council found that for the sample of 6,315 teachers in its 34 participating districts in 1959-60, the teacher turnover rate was 12.6 percent. The Council also found that two-thirds of the teacher loss occurred before age 31; 4 women in 10 leaving were under age 26;

¹³Minnesota Education Association, Research Division, "Teacher Turnover in Minnesota Public Schools, School Year 1960-61." Circular No. 80, (September, 1961), p. 9.

¹⁴Minnesota Education Association, Research Division, "Teacher Turnover in Minnesota Public Schools, School Year 1961-62." Circular No. 87, (September, 1962), p. 7.

maternity accounted for 23 percent of the turnover.

The percents of teachers leaving, with reasons for leaving, are given in Table 5.

TABLE 5¹⁵

TEACHER TURNOVER IN WESTERN
NEW YORK STATE, 1959-60

Reason for leaving	Percent of teachers leaving
1	2
Maternity.....	23.0%
Home conditions.....	18.0
Left to teach in another system.....	8.2
Retired.....	7.8
Marriage.....	6.9
Dismissal.....	6.4
Leaving education.....	5.2
Professional study.....	3.5
Military service.....	1.4
Promotion in another system.....	1.3
Death.....	1.1
Promotion within system.....	0.9
Number of teachers reporting.....	796

TENNESSEE SURVEYS. In 1962, the Tennessee Education Association published its first annual compilation of data on teacher turnover and its second in 1963. These surveys found that during 1960-61, the turnover in the state was an estimated 10 percent; in 1961-62, 11.6 percent; and that in both years about 5 percent of the state's teachers were lost to Tennessee classrooms.

The reason most frequently given for leaving was

¹⁵ Western New York School Study Council, "Teacher Turnover in Western New York, 1959-60," (April, 1961), p. 25.

acceptance of a teaching position in another system; 21 percent of all separations in 1960-61, and 25.4 percent in 1961-62. Reasons for separation and percents of teachers giving these reasons in both years are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6
PERCENTS OF TEACHER SEPARATIONS FROM TENNESSEE
SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 1960-61 AND 1961-62

Reason for leaving	1960-61 ¹⁶	1961-62 ¹⁷
1	2	3
Accepted teaching position in another system.....	21.0%	25.4%
Spouse transferred to another locality.....	10.0	11.8
Accepted position in business, industry, or other professional fields.....	7.2	7.6
Became fulltime homemaker.....	10.3	12.9
Entered Armed Forces.....	0.2	0.7
To attend school.....	3.3	3.0
Granted leave of absence for at least one school term.....	15.3	15.5
Retired.....	9.8	7.6
Deceased.....	1.9	1.8
Dismissed, not rehired, contract not renewed, etc.....	7.8	5.6
Changed to non-teaching job in same system.....	1.9	1.0
Illness.....	2.7	2.5
Other.....	8.6	4.6

EVANSVILLE COLLEGE SURVEY. In November, 1965, the writer conducted a questionnaire survey of Evansville College graduates who received teaching certificates from the

¹⁶ Tennessee Education Association, Research Division, "Teacher Resignations, Separations and Employment in Tennessee," (February, 1962), pp. 8-10.

¹⁷ Tennessee Education Association, Research Division, "Teacher Resignations, Separations, and Employment, 1961-62 to 1962-63, (May, 1963), pp. 6-7.

class of 1960. This group was chosen because other studies have shown that most cases of teacher turnover and teacher loss occur during the first five years of teaching; also the writer was a member of this class and felt that a better response would be forthcoming.

There were 93 graduates certified for classroom teaching. Of these 93 graduates, 66 began teaching in classrooms in Indiana, 25 began teaching in other states, and 2 entered graduate school upon graduation. Of the two entering graduate school, one is now a classroom teacher and the other has done only substitute teaching.

The writer feels very fortunate that 87 of the 93 graduates returned the questionnaire. These came from 47 men and 40 women. Of the 87 that returned the questionnaire, 45 are still teaching. Two, however, are teaching in parochial schools and one has done only substitute teaching. The rate of turnover is given in Table 7.

TABLE 7

TEACHER TURNOVER AMONG 87 GRADUATES
OF EVANSVILLE COLLEGE; CLASS OF 1960

Present status	Men	Women	Total
1	2	3	4
Have changed schools.....	7	2	9
Remained in same school...	15	20*	25
Substitute teaching only..	0	1	1
Total.....	22	23	45

*Two of these are teaching in parochial schools

The percentages of teachers leaving classroom teaching and distribution among men and women, with reason for leaving as expressed by the Evansville College graduates, are given in Table 8.

TABLE 8

REASONS FOR LEAVING CLASSROOM TEACHING AS
EXPRESSED BY 42 MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING
CLASS OF 1960 FROM EVANSVILLE COLLEGE

Reason for leaving	Percent	Men	Women	Total
1	2	3	4	5
Pregnancy.....	28.6%	0	12	12
Military service.....	16.7	7	0	7
Graduate school.....	16.7	4	3	7
Inadequate salary.....	11.0	5	0	5
Not consulted in charting the course of education.....	7.1	3	0	3
Did not offer oppor- tunities for individ- uality and creative- ness.....	4.8	2	0	2
Civil service work....	4.8	2	0	2
Teach in college.....	4.8	2	0	2
Marriage.....	4.8	0	2	2
Total	99.3%	25	17	42

Home responsibilities ranked highest among the reasons given by the Evansville College graduates for leaving classroom teaching. The next highest groups

were those who had entered graduate school and those who had entered the military service. Those who had entered the military service were drafted and indicated that they probably would return to teaching at a later date. Although it ranks at the top in many studies, low salaries ranked only fourth among the reasons given by the Evansville College graduates. Employers' and administrators' failures to offer opportunities for individuality and creativeness and to consult teachers in matters concerning the charting the course of education, was given by 11.9 percent of the graduates as reasons for leaving classroom teaching. To teach at the college level and to work in the civil service rank lowest among the reasons given.

SUMMARY OF SURVEYS. All of the above studies indicated that teacher loss was greater than teacher turnover. While the surveys indicated reasons for teacher loss, none gave definite reasons for teacher turnover. The Tennessee, New York, and Evansville College surveys found that among women the reasons most frequently given for leaving the profession were home responsibility or transfer of spouse to a different locality. Although, according to the Montgomery County, Maryland survey, only one person left teaching because of inadequate salary, other surveys revealed, that among men, inadequate salary or a more desirable position was the chief

reason for leaving classroom teaching. Inadequate salaries ranked only fourth among the Evansville College graduates. The Minnesota and Oregon surveys indicated that teacher loss is greatest in smaller schools or in schools that have no salary schedule.

CHAPTER III
EVALUATION OF MAJOR REASONS FOR
TEACHER TURNOVER AND TEACHER LOSS

The surveys which were presented in the preceeding chapters pointed out many reasons why teachers leave classroom teaching. This chapter deals with the evaluation of the major reasons for teacher loss and teacher turnover.

TO ASSUME HOME RESPONSIBILITIES. Home responsibilities were the main reason given by teachers for leaving classroom teaching. Teachers should not be encouraged to remain in classroom teaching when they wish to assume home responsibilities. Such a policy would likely tend to drive them out of teaching permanently. However, these teachers should be encouraged to return to teaching at a later date, and every opportunity should be given them to keep informed on new techniques, theories, and developments in subject matter.

Earl H. Hanson reports that 68 out of every 100 teachers are married. He continues by saying, "generally, marriage neither makes a poor teacher good, nor a good one poor." He has found that the consequences of acquiring a spouse seldom drastically affect teaching performance; rather, they are more likely to influence teachers' economic status and family membership.¹⁸

¹⁸ Earl H. Hanson, "What Does Marriage Do To Teaching?" Journal of the National Education Association, LII, No. 8 (November, 1963), p. 60.

TO ENTER ARMED SERVICES. At the present time, the military service will continue to take a tremendous toll of teachers. Many from this group will likely return to the classroom after their military obligations are over. This temporary loss to the teaching profession is to be expected by administrators at the present time and should not be cause for alarm.

TO ENTER GRADUATE SCHOOL AND TEACH AT COLLEGE LEVEL. Teachers should be encouraged to seek improvement of skills and opportunity for advancement. This can only be achieved through further education or training in specific areas. However, if these teachers are leaving the field of education entirely and are pursuing careers in other fields of work, then administrators should explore the reasons for this change and strive to make the teaching field more fulfilling. The ways this can be done will be discussed in a later chapter.

When teachers leave the classroom to accept administrative positions, college teaching positions or supervisory positions, they have advanced within the field of education and have not left the larger field of education. This possibility should always be open to classroom teachers for continued job satisfaction.

INADEQUATE SALARIES. In the survey of the graduates of Evansville College, the writer found that 11 percent had left classroom teaching because the salary was not adequate to retain them. All of those who gave this reason for leaving classroom teaching for another profession were men.

Gourley and Pourchot¹⁹ note that the estimated life earnings of teachers are exceeded by fourteen professional groups: physicians and surgeons; lawyers and judges; dentists; technical engineers; social scientists; artists; musicians; editors; professors; designers; college presidents and deans; accountants; statisticians; natural scientists. Endicott points out that the top salaries of teachers are relatively low, even compared to beginning salaries, and this is borne out by an examination of salary schedules. No classroom teacher can expect to double his entering salary even though he might attain a master's degree. However, in the business areas, a young college graduate can expect to double his starting salary between the fifth and tenth year of employment.²⁰

In the N E A JOURNAL, October, 1963, the National Education Association Research Division gave further proof that teachers' salaries in 1962 were

¹⁹Robert H. Gourley and Leonard Pourchot, "Teacher Dropouts," Illinois Education, LIII, No. 6 (February, 1965), p. 259.

²⁰Frank S. Endicott, "Trends in Employment of College and University Graduates in Business and Industry, 17th Annual Report," 1963. MIMED.

still below those of accountants, attorneys, auditors, chemists, and engineers. The average salary for school instructional staff was \$5,787. For the five other professions mentioned above, the average salary was \$9,803.²¹

Approximately 500,000 men are now employed in public school classrooms. Lambert states that 80 percent of the men teaching in public elementary and secondary schools are married, and their families typically include two children. Over 40 percent have master's degrees. By and large, they have more educational preparation than women teachers, but they are ten years younger and have had only half as much teaching experience.²²

The research division of the Montana Education Association found that the salary of the man who taught in the state of Montana in 1957 and entered another occupation in 1958 was 24 percent higher; for the woman teacher, the salary was 16 percent higher.²³

When men have large families to support, they cannot be expected to remain in the teaching profession and receive lower incomes if opportunities arise that

²¹National Education Association, Research Division, "The N.E.A. Works For Teachers' Salaries," Journal of the National Education Association, LII No. 7 (October, 1963), p. 13.

²²Sam M. Lambert, "Angry Young Men in Teaching," Journal of the National Education Association, LII No. 2 (February, 1963), pp. 17-20.

²³Montana Education Association, Research Division, "Teacher Loss: Montana Public Schools, 1958," (May, 1959), pp. 1-8.

afford better means of support for their families. The welfare and future for their children are the prime reasons why these men leave teaching. They have college degrees and want to provide the same opportunities for their children.

Good salaries will not guarantee good teachers, but low salaries will most certainly keep many potentially good teachers out of the classroom.

LACK OF CONSIDERATION BY EMPLOYERS AND ADMINISTRATORS.

Teachers are becoming more militant and restless than they have been in the past. This is evidenced through their willingness to strike although risking the closing of schools. This new spirit has caused them to desire a more significant role in charting the course that education is to take, as evidenced in the Evansville College survey. This includes curriculum, salary schedule, school policy, textbook adoption, methods of instruction, and changes involving the buildings. The writer found that 7.1 percent of the 1960 graduates of Evansville College who left the teaching profession gave this as their reason for quitting. Many teachers feel that they have good ideas about education and want to see these ideas given a chance to blossom.

The writer also found in the survey of the Evansville College graduates that 4.8 percent felt classroom teaching did not offer opportunities for individuality

and creativeness, and they left for this reason. Teachers must be encouraged and given a chance to create and explore new ideas and receive recognition for these creations. Regardless of the age of the teacher, the spark of creativeness and feeling of worthiness needs to be kindled. It is the responsibility of the administration to see that the tinder is provided to keep the spark glowing.

CHAPTER IV

WAYS TEACHERS CAN BE ENCOURAGED TO REMAIN OR RETURN TO THE CLASSROOM

The writer holds that little, if anything, can be done by the administrator to counter many of the reasons for teacher loss or teacher turnover. Therefore, the writer will confine this section of the paper to three of the reasons that he believes are of direct concern to the administrator. These are: (1) provide opportunities for former classroom teachers with home responsibilities to keep abreast of changes in education, (2) provide adequate salaries with fringe benefits, and (3) employers and administrators give professional autonomy to classroom teachers.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMER CLASSROOM TEACHERS WITH HOME RESPONSIBILITIES TO KEEP ABREAST OF CHANGES IN EDUCATION. It is the writer's opinion that the administration can and should do nothing about the classroom teachers that leave to assume home responsibilities. About 70 percent of all classroom teachers are women; therefore, marriage and maternity can be expected to take a great percentage of teachers out of the classroom. The Yale-Fairfield Study reveals that

three women in four that are elementary school teachers with five or fewer years of experience, hope and expect to give up teaching at least temporarily in order to raise a family.²⁴

Whether these teachers leave temporarily or permanently should concern the administrator. It is the responsibility of the administration to advise teachers wishing to return to their classroom of the avenues for keeping abreast of the advances made in education. These avenues of assistance might consist of college classes, educational TV, adult education, personal reading programs, involvement with parent-school organizations, substitute teaching and re-training programs.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE SALARIES WITH FRINGE BENEFITS. Inadequate salaries ranked high among the reasons given by male classroom teachers for leaving the teaching profession. The salaries of teachers must be raised to a level nearer to that of other professions before schools can hope to retain an adequate number of highly competent teachers in the profession. The National Education Association adopted a resolution in July of 1963 which stated that, "the salaries of beginning qualified teachers should be at least \$6,000, and for master's degree teachers with ten years of teaching experience

²⁴Constance M. Burns, Teacher Preparation for Mothers Who Are College Graduates, "Yale-Fairfield Study of Elementary Teaching Report for 1954-55," (September, 1959), p. 1.

should range to \$13,000 and higher, followed by continuing salary advances."²⁵

The writer maintains that in many rural school districts the range established by the National Education Association is too high and in many large suburban districts the range is too low. Rent, food, and other costs of living have to be considered when making a salary schedule. The writer questions the idea of every school district throughout the country offering the same salary schedule. This would be the same as expecting to pay the same price for any hotel room in every city in the country. The demand for and responsibilities of teachers determine what salaries to expect.

When it is impossible to provide adequate salaries, it might be possible for the school district to provide "fringe benefits" for teachers to hold personnel and boost staff morale. These could include sick leave, retirement income, health insurance, life insurance, self-improvement programs, personal leaves, liability insurance, and credit unions.

EMPLOYERS AND ADMINISTRATORS GIVE PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS. The Evansville College survey revealed that many teachers are leaving classroom teaching because of their relationship with their employers

²⁵"The N.E.A. Works For Teachers' Salaries," loc. cit., p. 12.

and administration; the other studies presented did not stress this. The writer suggests that this group represents the greatest loss to the teaching profession, not in numbers but in terms of the potential contribution that they could make to education, and should be given the most consideration by those controlling education. Herein probably lie the best creative minds, critics, inventors, and artists that the field of education has to offer. This group realizes that the freedom to think freely, create new methods of teaching, explore avenues of research, and achieve responsibility, praise and recognition are paramount to making the teacher successful and establishing a feeling of self worth. This group is being denied these by employers and administrators who refuse to share responsibility, grant recognition, and encourage and provide time for research and creativeness.

"The task of administration is two fold; to achieve the goals of the school, and to meet the needs of the participating human beings."²⁶ If administrators would meet the needs of the teachers by reducing anxieties, improving the physical conditions of the school, sharing responsibilities and recognizing the ability to

²⁶Gourley and Pourchot, loc. cit. p. 262.

devise and create better teaching methods, a great deal of teacher loss would be alleviated.

What does democracy mean save that the individual is to have a share in determining the conditions and the aims of his own work and that on the whole, through the free and mutual harmonizing of different individuals, the work of the world is better done than when planned, arranged, and directed by a few, no matter how wise or of how good intent that few? How can we justify our belief in the democratic principle elsewhere, and then go back entirely upon it when we come to education?²⁷

²⁷ John Dewey, "Democracy For The Teacher," Progressive Education, VIII, No. 3 (March, 1931), p. 216.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY. By the use of studies and surveys, this paper has presented some of the causes and effects of teacher turnover and teacher loss in the public schools. The reasons given most often by classroom teachers for leaving were: (1) home responsibilities, (2) inadequate salaries, (3) lack of community recreational and social opportunities, (4) lack of consideration by employer and administration, (5) college teaching, (6) graduate school, (7) the Armed Forces, (8) leave of absence, (9) non-teaching job in same system, and (10) civil service work.

The writer suggests that three of the major reasons for teacher turnover and teacher loss are of direct concern to the administrator. These are: (1) the assumption of home responsibilities, (2) inadequate salaries, and (3) lack of consideration by employers and administration. The writer holds that little, if anything, can be done directly by the administrator in connection with the other reasons presented.

In order for the public schools to retain classroom teachers and encourage others to return to teaching, classroom teaching must be more lucrative and fulfilling.

This can be achieved partially if administrators and employers: (1) provide teachers who have left to assume home responsibilities with opportunities to keep abreast of changes in education and to be prepared in the event that they should desire to return to teaching; (2) provide adequate salaries with fringe benefits such as sick leave with pay, adequate retirement income, self-improvement programs, personal leaves with pay, health services, and credit unions; (3) grant recognition for teacher creativeness; (4) share responsibilities; and (5) encourage and provide opportunity for research and creativeness.

If the problem of teacher turnover and teacher loss is to decline, all educators, and especially administrators, must first of all face up to the fact that a problem exists, and second, work together to find out what is wrong with classroom teaching and what solutions can be found.

CONCLUSIONS. The writer has gained an awareness of the extent of the problem of teacher turnover and teacher loss and feels that he now has information that could be used to help improve school situations and staff morale if the opportunity arises. He is fully aware that the administrator should share with all of the school employees those responsibilities that have bearing upon their work.

The administrator should provide leadership for the entire teaching staff. As long as his enthusiasm for improvement of education is vibrant and alive, the enthusiasm of the teaching staff will be vibrant and alive. When his enthusiasm declines, the teaching staff will become discontented and morale will break down.

APPENDIX A

EVANSVILLE COLLEGE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

EVANSVILLE COLLEGE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

NOVEMBER 1965

1. Are you presently employed as a classroom teacher in public schools? _____
2. Have you changed schools since you began teaching?
Same district _____
Other district _____
3. What was your reason for changing schools? _____
4. If you are no longer employed as a classroom teacher, what are you doing? (administrator, graduate school, other occupation than teaching, etc.) _____
5. If you are no longer employed as a classroom teacher, what was your reason for quitting? _____
6. If you are no longer teaching, do you feel that you would ever wish to return to classroom teaching? _____

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